

### Yoshida Replaces Ii as Kyodan Moderator

The Standing Committee of The United Church of Christ in Japan, meeting in Tokyo Thurs., Feb. 18, accepted the resignation of Moderator Kiyoshi Ii and elected Vice Moderator Mitsuho Yoshida as his successor.

Mr. Ii submitted his resignation as a result of a plan adopted by the Standing Committee in an effort to move toward the convening of the General Assembly, postponed from last fall. The plan, prepared by Mr. Ii, is known as "D", indicating that it is the fourth of various proposals that have been put forth for the holding of the General Assembly. It states that the Moderator and the entire Standing Committee accept responsibility for the present state of affairs, in which it has been impossible to call the biennial Assembly, and that, in that it would be irresponsible at this time for the entire committee to resign, the resignation of the Moderator as a representation of the Standing Committee is a manifestation of their corporate responsibility. Plan D charges Yoshida with the responsibility of convening the Assembly and states that the Standing Committee, with the cooperation of the districts, will endeavor to hold the General Assembly before the end of October 1971.

Yoshida, who was elected Vice Moderator in 1969 following the resignation of Rev. Takeshi Takasaki, is pastor of Kochi Church in Shikoku. He stated that he had promised his congregation that he would serve as Moderator only until a new Moderator could be elected by the General Assembly and no later than October of this year.

The Standing Committee asked Mr. Ii to continue as consultant in view of his experience with the many details of Kyodan affairs. Mr. Ii, who is pastor of Reinanzaka Church, Tokyo, served as Secretary of the Kyodan for two terms and as Vice Moderator for a term and a half before he assumed the post of Moderator upon the death of Rev. Masahisa Suzuki in July 1969.

In a parting word to the Standing Committee, Mr. Ii said, "As I have previously stated many times, it is true that I have taken a different stance than that which I held when the Moderatorship was placed upon me. However, in this I have been guided by the leading of my conscience informed by my faith. I am deeply sorry for the disturbance that you and the Kyodan have experienced. My love for the Kyodan remains unchanged and I shall continue to serve her wherever possible.

The Standing Committee was attended by 23 of the 30 members and by moderators or representatives of the moderators of the 16 districts. For two days preceding the Standing Committee meeting, district moderators and Standing Committee members participated in a discussion meeting in preparation for the official action to be taken at the meeting on the 18th. Secretary of the General Assembly Tomomi Kimura continues in office.







Japanese Pastors View Ministry To GIs

What is the relationship between pacifist Christians in a country committed by its Constitution to a non-military posture, and soldiers of another country, stationed in the country under the terms of a treaty between the two governments?

The question is a very pressing one in a number of Japanese communities where U.S. military bases occupy large areas of land.

Iwakuni is such a community, located on southeastern Honshu, near Hiroshima. Besides being an industrial city of 107,000 population, Iwakuni is the site of a U.S. Marine Air Base destined to become a more-or-less permanent base in the face of the reductions in number of U.S. bases and number of U.S. troops stationed in Japan.

Rev. Kensaku Iwai, pastor of the Iwakuni United Church of Christ in Japan, recently described his first reaction to seeing the base, when he moved to Iwakuni in 1965. "I was not particularly impressed by the expanse of base buildings scattered across the green lawns except to say 'how extravagant'," he wrote in an article in the Jan. 30 issue of the Kyodan Shimpo. "Then I saw a foreign flag flying above the installation and I suddenly realized how physically close but how spiritually distant this symbol was for me." Later, he says, he realized this was a natural reaction in view of his opposition to the Security Treaty.

Since 1960, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. has been sponsor of a Christian Servicemen's Center in the city of Iwakuni, just outside the main gate of the base. Its primary purpose has been described as "providing a home away from home for GIs." Its program has included visits to Japanese homes, tours, conversation, games, music, and classes in Japanese culture.

Rev. Iwai and other pastors in the Iwakuni area, along with the Japan National Christian Council, have had a nominal role in ministries with Service personnel, on such specific problems as GI-Japanese marriages, or citizens' complaints against GIs or the base.

Six months ago, however, a knock on the door of a missionary pastor in a nearby town brought a change in the nature of the church-base relationships. The visitor was a GI who wanted to talk to someone about his personal doubts with regard to military service. The man he came to see supports conscientious objection. He did not feel, however, that his primary task was to force his position upon the soldier but to enable the boy to clarify his own convictions and, if he felt committed to the CO position, to take advantage of alternatives other than desertion available to him.

"When this happened, I began to realize that there were men on the base who thought of themselves as human beings, not just as soldiers," says Iwai. After this and a second similar incident, Japanese pastors who had not, up to this point, been too familiar with the CO position, began to study it and other



questions related to the military including the chaplaincy and their own faith in regard to military service. One church sponsored discussion meetings with GIs. Pastors and church members began to feel a much deeper link as they listened to the boys' experiences and feelings and expressed their own convictions.

Recently word came from the NCCC-USA that the Iwakuni Christian Servicemen's Center might be shut down. Japanese pastors rose to defend the need for a Center. In a letter to NCC General Secretary Masaaki Nakajima, they urged that a Center program be continued and pointed out their views of a valid Christian ministry that challenges the Christians and churches in both lands. At its January meeting, the Japan NCC Division on Mission Committee agreed that it must not neglect the ministry to GIs, regardless of the decision of the NCCC-USA. Yet here, it agreed, as the Iwakuni pastors had indicated, was possibility for cooperative mission at a new depth. The question was, would American churches see these dimensions and respond?

#### High Priority = Pension for Retirees

Statistics included with the January Kyodan News Letter showed a total of 2,068 active ministers. Among these, 1,435 are ordained men serving churches, the balance being in other than churches or licensed preachers.

A further analysis of the figures points to one of the urgent problems the Kyodan is struggling with today--that of 1) providing adequate pensions for 320 pastors above the age of 65 who are still serving and being supported by local churches and 2) providing more adequately for 302 retired pastors and widows, whose pension is below the subsistence level.

Here are some of the facts assembled in an effort to draw up a plan for providing livable incomes for long-time servants of the church:

302 pastors and widows receive pensions averaging less than  
\$30.00 per person per month

320 pastors, 22% of the total number of active ordained pastors,  
are over the age of 65; they receive no pension but depend  
upon the salary from the church they serve

170 of the above 320 are over the age of 70

42 of the above 320 are over the age of 80

Among the elderly pastors still serving congregations, a number are no longer vigorous enough to carry the full load of responsibility, yet are unable to retire because of the small pension allowance. At the same time, churches served by such pastors do not force them to retire when they have no sufficient means of support, but neither can the churches afford a second salary for a younger more active assistant.

Looking at the problem from another side, one-third of all local church contributions to the national Kyodan budget is paid out in pensions.



The situation today is of deep concern to the Kyodan's younger pastors as well as to the men most directly affected. It grows out of several factors:

The small pension fund brought into the United Church, when it was formed in 1941, was all but obliterated by post-war inflation.

Immediate post-war demands had to take priority over building up the pension fund.

Choice of the ministry as a vocation has severed some persons from the traditional circle of family security.

Gradually steps have been taken to correct the deficiency. In 1958, an accumulation of ¥2 million was invested in the shaonkin (thanksgiving) fund from which to pay benefits to those who have reached retirement age. In 1943, a special day had been set for annual shaonkin offerings. In 1963 a plan by which active pastors and churches pay premiums into a retirement plan was established. In 1959 a contribution of \$70,000 from overseas helped to boost the shaonkin fund, and in 1970, \$306,000 from the sale of real estate by the Kyodan further increased the capital.

To meet the church's responsibility toward its elderly workers more fully and at the same time to enable churches to direct a larger share of their contributions to other needs, plans are being drawn on several levels:

1. The National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies is planning to build a retirement home for women pastors and Bible women, underwritten by a sizeable contribution from women overseas and by the Federations's own campaign among Kyodan churches.
2. Several districts are establishing retirement homes for pastors and Christian workers.
3. An addition, accommodating 20 persons, is being built onto the Shinaiso Home for Elderly Pastors.
4. The shaonkin fund will eventually be separated from the running budget and combined with the premium-supported pension fund.
5. A special campaign for \$1,670,000 will be carried on in Japan and overseas to accumulate a fund to increase the present pension payments and make it possible for all pastors above the age of 70 to retire.

Considering that the average retirement age in Japan is 55 for men, Christian pastors and other workers reflect a high degree of endurance and patience. Yet counterbalancing their devotion are the facts of the burden some older pastors must carry and the importance of continuing the flow of youthful energy into the life of the church.

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NOTE: Beginning January 1971 persons not now receiving the Kyodan News Letter regularly may receive it on an annual subscription basis for ¥800 within Japan or \$3.00 by airmail overseas.

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what has been ---- I N T H E K Y O D A N ---- what is to be

## I. Coming Events

Central Rally on Feb. 21 focussing on anti-nationalization of Yasukuni draws people from all over Japan  
Tokyo district to discuss convening of district assembly at open meeting Mar. 2

## II. Kyodan

16 district moderators meet in Tokyo 2/15, hear reports, including assembly plans and dates for all but 5 districts; discuss various district executive committee views and normalizing of Kyodan, hear personnel committee report on Kyodan missionary study

District moderators and Standing Comm. hold two-day discussion meeting 2/16-17  
Mod. Ii resigns and Vice Mod. Yoshida assumes Moderatorship at 17th Standing Comm. meeting 2/18 under Plan D (News Letter 2/20)  
see also "Coming Events"

### Evangelism

Comm. on Evangelism meets to evaluate 10-year plan of evangelism (Shimpo 1/30)

### Faith and Order

Faith and Order Comm. meets Feb. 1 to discuss issues involved in present Confession of Faith (Shimpo 2/13)

### Mission

Comm. on Mission studies evaluation of 10-year evangelism plan at Jan. 29 meeting (Shimpo 2/13)

### Overseas

COC Chrm. Ii, COC Secy. Matthews and Yo Saeki meet with IBC secretaries in N.Y. in Feb. to discuss possible new form of cooperation (Tsushin 1/21)

### Social Concerns

Eight religious organizations issue request to LDP to drop Yasukuni bill (Shimpo 2/20)

Comm. on Social Concerns publishes pamphlet on immigration bill to come before Diet (Shimpo 2/20)

Osaka groups decide to bring immigration bill issue before UN Commission on Human Rights (Shimbun 2/6)

Iwakuni churches carry on study and counselling program related to GIs on base (Shimpo 1/30, News Letter 2/71)

5,000 expected to participate in anti-Yasukuni bill hunger strike Feb.-Mar. see also "Coming Events"

### TUTS

Zenkyoto students disband; meet with TUTS Special Problems Comm. Feb. 8 (Shimpo 2/13)

### Women

National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies' Central Comm. decides to undertake retirement home for women workers, team to Korea, September leadership training seminar (Shimpo 1/30)

Shimpo=Kyodan weekly / Shimbun=Kirisuto Shimbun weekly / Tsushin=Christian daily

News Letter=English monthly